

UH / HH-60M Utility Helicopter

What is it?

The UH-60M Black Hawk is the Army's new utility helicopter that will extend the service life of the current utility helicopter fleet by an additional 20 years. The Army plans to procure 1,227 UH-60Ms through 2025, which, along with the recapitalization of UH-60A and UH-60L, will bring the fleet to at least 1,931 aircraft. Recent proposed changes to the aviation force structure may increase that fleet size to over 2,100 aircraft.

The UH-60M is a new production Black Hawk retaining essentially the same performance capability of UH-60L while improving the system interoperability, survivability and sustainability. The aircraft has a fully integrated, digitized, open avionics architecture providing a glass-cockpit, fully coupled flight director, Embedded GPS/INS navigation system, integrated Blue-Force Tracker and digital moving map system. The Integrated Vehicle Health Management System (IVHMS) reduces maintenance workload and sets the stage for full implementation of Condition Based Maintenance. UH-60M is an "all weather, all terrain, day/night/night-vision-system" vertical maneuver platform critical to the warfight. The Black Hawk delivers 11 combat-loaded troops to a radius of 225 kilometers and can transport an external load of 4,500 pounds to a radius of 135 kilometers, all in "High/Hot" conditions. The medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) version of the Black Hawk, HH-60M, includes a full medical evacuation mission equipment package in the cabin area, integrated Forward Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR) and an onboard oxygen generating system.

What has Army Aviation Done?

To date, the Army has taken delivery of 171 UH/HH-60Ms with fielding to 4th Battalion, 159th Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault); 1st Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), 1st Infantry Division; ARNG unit(s) in Minnesota and Wisconsin (UH), Vermont and Massachusetts (HH), Florida and Georgia (HH), Hawaii (UH) and the training base at Fort Rucker, Ala. In addition, several aircraft were delivered to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) for conversion to MH-60M. Recently, the UH-60M completed its first successful combat deployment with "Wings of the Eagle", 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Brigade, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). UH-60M training is fully integrated into the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) system with aviator qualification occurring at Fort Rucker and maintenance training at Fort Eustis, Va. In support of Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN), the USAACE and the UH Project Management Office (PMO) have also teamed together to conduct a Mobile Training Team (MTT) for units that are preparing for deployment. UH-60M is fielded concurrent with all Training Aids Devices Simulators and Simulation (TADSS) required for sustainment training to include the Transportable Black Hawk Operational Simulator (TBOS).

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?

The Black Hawk is an incremental program in the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System (JCIDS) and as such will continue to have its requirements assessed, updated and defined based on changing DOD/Army concept guidance and evolving Warfighting needs. Post-production modifications planned for UH/HH-60M include:

- The Upturned Exhaust System (UES) to replace the current Improved Hover Infrared Suppression System (IHIRSS).
- Software upgrades to correct deficiencies found during operational testing and to comply with Global Air Traffic Management (GATM) requirements for Required Navigation Performance/Area Navigation (RNP/RNAV), Communications and Surveillance.
- Improvements to crew and passenger seating design.
- Improvements to external position and anti-collision lighting.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?

The Black Hawk is the workhorse of Army Aviation. The Army has a critical need for sustaining the UH/HH-60 helicopter in order to meet the operational requirements of the current and future forces, while simultaneously improving survivability and reducing Operating and Support (O&S) costs associated with the aging fleet. UH/HH-60M provides enhanced mission effectiveness by maintaining the positive aspects of the current fleet while increasing interoperability, survivability, supportability, sustainability, and increasing operator and maintainer effectiveness.

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